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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8611

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000462

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STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA, PM

STATE FOR INL, INR/R/MR, NEA/IR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [PTER](#) [CI](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - IRAQ

On March 4, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record "El Mercurio" (circ. 116,807) ran a weekly round-up column entitled, "The Difficult Creation of a Government." Quote:

"To withdraw hastily from Iraq does not seem to be the solution to today's problem. To continue the current gradual withdrawal program or move to a mass withdrawal could be dangerous because the Iraqi military and police forces are not capable of replacing the foreign forces. Maintaining or reinforcing the current contingent could even be counterproductive because many feel the occupation forces are responsible for inciting violence. Either way there is the threat of creating greater chaos in Iraq, which is why the White House's challenge is enormous."

KELLY